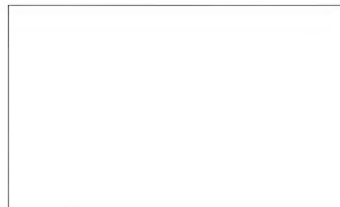


Approved For Release 2008/12/08 : CIA-RDP86M00886R001000010006-7

MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

Bob Gates sent the attached memo up to John as a matter of interest.

As it represents a different interpretation of the Gromyko visit, John thought you should see it also.



Date 26 Sept 84

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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #05512-84
25 September 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: [REDACTED]

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National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: Upbeat View On Gromyko's Mission

1. [REDACTED] who has been serving as A/NIO/USSR pro tem, has developed the attached interpretation of the Gromyko visit, which is decidedly more optimistic than the mainline of the material we have been sending forward, and my own view. He makes a significant case that Chernenko is leading a contentious effort toward a new opening. As indicated by his remarks at the staff meeting, [REDACTED] is leaning a bit in this direction.

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2. On the totality of evidence, I continue to believe that the best case is as we have made it. There may be an exploratory element in the Gromyko mission, but his main aim is to try to put the Administration on the defensive. The Soviets may still not appreciate how unlikely they are to be really successful at this.

3. [REDACTED] argument has merit, however. Thus I want to send it forward to you. At the same time, I'll stick by the more pessimistic prognosis. Moreover, I still would not absolutely rule out some sort of negative surprise.

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4. At this point, it seems fruitless to anticipate Gromyko's performance over the next three days unless we get some truly dramatic reporting about his script. There are doubtless a variety of high-level US-Soviet interactions now taking place in preparation for the meetings with Gromyko that give the policymakers a better insight into the immediate future than we can. If Gromyko comes in more amiably than we have forecast, the President will have the instincts and time to pick up his cue, I would bet.

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Attachment: As stated

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25 September 1984

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Further Thoughts on Gromyko Visit

1. The very fact of Gromyko's visit here marks an important tactical turn in the Soviet approach to the US -- a turn spearheaded by the ailing Chernenko and supported by what appears to be a fragile consensus that could evaporate with his passing from the scene.

2. We have only an imperfect understanding of how this change came about. The Soviets may indeed have concluded that Mr. Reagan will be President for four more years and are moving now to lay the groundwork for a better working relationship. The political benefit accruing to President Reagan, while presumably undesirable in the Soviet leaders' eyes, may have been played down in their deliberations, with the rationalization that he is going to win anyway -- with or without a boost from Moscow.

3. We are not fully persuaded.

- It would seem, for example, totally out of character for the Soviets to believe that they can expect to win concessions from a formidable, committed opponent by doing him a gratuitous favor -- in this case a benign visit by Gromyko.
- For the four-more-years argument to prevail in Kremlin councils, the burden of proof would have to be on those arguing that the advantages of trimming sails before the US election (virtually ensuring a Reagan victory) clearly outweigh the merits of hewing to the more obdurate, waiting policy of the past spring and summer.
- The Soviets normally have a price (they don't put much stock in credit cards), and Gromyko presumably has his. And there is still an outside chance that if he does not get satisfaction, the Soviets will try to use Gromyko's talks here to create a political "defeat" for the President.

4. Most of the recent signs point in the opposite direction, however, with Chernenko himself spearheading Moscow's more flexible, conciliatory approach. While he continues to cast aspersions on Washington's motives, his recent statements are a marked departure from the acerbic rhetoric earlier this year.

- On 5 September, shortly after the decision to send Gromyko, Chernenko talked about the need "to infuse Soviet-US relations with the elements of mutual trust that are so missing at present."

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- In his Pravda "interview" on 2 September, Chernenko for the first time raised the possibility of a connection between progress on arms control in space and progress on other issues, including INF and START. (Chernenko and his Politburo colleagues have passed up several recent opportunities to reiterate Moscow's standard formulation about INF missile deployment being the obstacle to resumption of talks.)
- Inserted into Chernenko's otherwise uninteresting speech today is the assertion that "there is no sensible alternative" to the normalization of Soviet-US relations, phraseology remarkably similar to President Reagan's statement yesterday that "there is no sane alternative" to negotiations on arms control and other issues between the US and USSR. Chernenko went on to make an unusually explicit allusion to the costliness of the arms race. (Radio Moscow, in its initial reaction to the President's speech, took a much more negative line, claiming that he continues to insist on US military superiority.)

5. Turns in policy toward improving relations with the US have historically been highly controversial among Kremlin leaders -- and particularly when high-level meetings are involved. The decision to send Gromyko was probably no exception.

- It may, in some Byzantine way, have cost Ogarkov his job. (Ukrainian leader Shelest lost his in 1972 after he objected to the decision to go ahead with the first Nixon summit just a few weeks after the US started bombing Hanoi and mining Haiphong.)
- The fact that Soviet media have still not mentioned that Gromyko will talk with the President on Friday suggests that the subject remains contentious. Soviet media also ignored the encounter at the reception on Sunday evening.
- The bizarre way in which the Soviets handled the issue of ASAT talks over recent months also suggests high-level division.
- In a recent conversation with a Western diplomat, a Soviet official indicated that there are differences in Moscow on dialogue with the US, and that the decision to send Gromyko to meet with the President was a particularly difficult one.
- Where Gromyko himself stands in the apparent debate is not clear; most of the reporting has him favoring a hard line.

6. If you think these musings are useful enough to send forward, we could provide a version for the PDB to carry tomorrow morning before Secretary Shultz meets with Gromyko.

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